





Fasting

*I set my face unto the
Lord God, to seek by
prayer and supplications,
with fasting.*

Daniel 9:3




Why talk about it?

-  It is all over the Bible.
-  It is seldom talked about.
-  It touches many other topics.
-  It appears to be condoned in the NT as something we should do.

Christadelphian Paradigm

- Each church has its own idiosyncrasies
 - Church of Christ – Musical Instruments
 - Seven Day Adventists – Saturday Worship
- Each has a tendency toward status quo based on their paradigm and idiosyncrasies
- John Thomas, Robert Roberts focused on...
 - Baptism, breaking of bread, prophecy, setting ourselves apart from Christendom

Biblical Fasting Trivia

-  How many instances of fasting in the Bible?
-  The first instance of fasting in the Bible?
-  What is the only God-mandated day of fasting?

Questions

- Should the believer fast?
- What is the spiritual significance of fasting?
- Why does God respond to fasting?
- What is the relationship between famine and fasting?
- What are the medical benefits of fasting?

Outline

- Fasting Basics
- The Medical Side of Fasting
- Successful Fasting
- Fasting Miscellany
- Fasting & Famine - The Nature of Trials



Fasting

Fasting Basics



Fasting Basics

- Are there different kinds of fasting?
- Should we fast?
- What are the spiritual benefits of fasting?
- What happens to us when we fast?

Different Kinds of Fasting

- The Normal Fast
 - Abstaining from food, but not water
 - Luke 4:2
- The Absolute Fast
 - No food or water
 - Ezra 10:6, Est. 4:16; Acts 9:9
 - Supernatural: Deut. 9:9,18; Ex. 34:28
- The Partial Fast
 - Abstinance from certain foods or drinks
 - Dan. 10:2,3

Fasting Basics

- Practice customarily associated with mourning (Neh. 1:4; Esther 4:3; 9:31)
- Associated with the wearing of sackcloth and ashes (Neh. 9:1; Ps. 35:13)
- Afflicts the soul and body (Ps. 69:10)
- Done during times of adversity (Ps. 109:22-25)

National Fast (during captivity)

capture of
Jerusalem
(Jer. 52:6, 7)

burning Jerusalem
(Jer. 52:12, 13)

Gedaliah murdered
(Jer. 41:1, 2)

siege of Jerusalem
(Jer. 52:4)

18 Then the word of the LORD
of hosts came to me, saying,
19 "Thus says the LORD of
hosts: 'The fast of the fourth
month, The fast of the fifth,
The fast of the seventh, And
the fast of the tenth, Shall be
joy and gladness and cheerful
feasts For the house of Judah.
Therefore love truth and
peace.'

Zechariah 8:18, 19

Individuals Fasting (for various reasons)

- Hanna provoked by another (1 Sam. 1:6, 7)
- Jonathan disgusted with his father and grieving for David (1 Sam. 20:34)
- David mourning for Abner (2 Sam. 3:35)
- David during his child's sickness (2 Sam. 12:16)
- Ahab at the preaching of Elijah (1 Kings 21:27)

Jesus Fasted

- Ps. 69
 - Messianic psalm – vvs. 9,21
 - Fasting – vvs. 10,11



Should We Fast?

- Great men of the Bible fasted
 - Jesus
 - Moses
 - Daniel
 - Elijah
 - David
 - Ezra
 - Paul
- The first century ecclesia fasted

New Testament Evidence of Fasting

- Jesus anticipates that his followers will fast
 - “And Jesus said...the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and **then shall they fast.**” (Mt 9:15)
 - “Moreover **when** ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance.” (Mt 6:16)

New Testament Evidence of Fasting

- In the church at Antioch the following were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen, who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. One day while they were offering worship to the Lord and **keeping a fast**, the Holy Spirit said, "I want Barnabas and Saul set apart for the work to which I have called them." So it was that **after fasting and prayer** they laid their hands on them and sent them off. (Acts 13:1-3 NJB)
- "And when they had ordained them elders **in every church**, and had prayed **with fasting**, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed." (Acts 14:23)

New Testament Evidence of Fasting

And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity; and she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but **served God with fastings and prayers night and day.** (Luke 2:36-37)

Extra-Biblical Evidence for Fasting

- The following is taken from the *Didache*:
 - 8:1 And let not your fastings be with the hypocrites, for they fast on the second and the fifth day of the week;
 - 8:2 but do ye keep your fast on the fourth and on the preparation (the sixth) day.

Extra-Biblical Evidence for Fasting

- *Apology* by Aristides to Hadrian concerning the Christians.
 - “When someone is poor among them who has need of help, they fast for two or three days, and they have the custom of sending him the food which they had prepared for themselves.”
(The Sacred Art of Fasting, Thomas Ryan, p. 52)

Extra-Biblical Evidence for Fasting

- *The Shepherd of Hermas*

- “First of all, keep thyself from every evil word and every evil desire, and purify thy heart from all the vanities of this world. If thou keep these things, this fast shall be perfect for thee. And thus shalt thou do. Having fulfilled what is written, on that day on which thou fastest thou shalt taste nothing but bread and water; and from thy meats, which thou wouldest have eaten, thou shalt reckon up the amount of that day's expenditure, which thou wouldest have incurred, and shalt give it to a widow, or an orphan, or to one in want, and so shalt thou humble thy soul, that he that hath received from thy humiliation may satisfy his own soul, and may pray for thee to the Lord. If then thou shalt so accomplish this fast, as I have commanded thee, thy sacrifice shall be acceptable in the sight of God, and this fasting shall be recorded; and the service so performed is beautiful and joyous and acceptable to the Lord.”

(The Sacred Art of Fasting, Thomas Ryan, p. 46)

(The Sacred Art of Fasting, Thomas Ryan, p. 46)

Spiritual Benefits of Fasting

- **Focus on the Return of Christ:**

- *if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to **eat and drink**, and to be drunken; The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers. (Luke 12:45,46)*
- Mt 24:38 For as in the days that were before the flood they were **eating and drinking**, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark,

- Eating and drinking are a metaphor for apathy toward the coming of the Lord.
- We should be hungry for the coming of Jesus.

Spiritual Benefits of Fasting

- **Focus on Denying the Flesh (Self-Discipline):**
 - *I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified. (1 Corinthians 9:27 NASB)*
 - *Therefore I say unto you, **Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink**; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? (Matt. 6:25)*
 - *If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for to morrow we die. (1 Cor. 15:32)*
- Fasting is representative of the denial of the flesh.
- Fasting cleans the body of physical impurities.
- We need to be hungry for the righteousness of God.

Fasting to Deny the Flesh

I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled... Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: **for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God**, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words. (Dan. 10:3,12)

Self-Discipline



- In a culture where the landscape is dotted with shrines to the "GOLDEN ARCHES" and an assortment of "PIZZA TEMPLES", fasting seems out of place, out of step with the times - Richard Foster, *The Celebration Of Discipline*, p. 47

Spiritual Benefits of Fasting

- **Focus on Prayer:**
 - *And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting. (Da 9:3)*
 - *I humbled my soul with fasting; and my prayer returned into mine own bosom. (Ps. 35:13)*
- A side effect of fasting is that the mind becomes clear and sharp.
- Good for making important decisions.
- We need to be hungry for the wisdom of God and fellowship with Him.



Spiritual Benefits of Fasting

- **Focus on God's Word:**

- *And he humbled thee, and **suffered thee to hunger**, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live.*
(Deut . 8:3)

- We need to be hungry for the word (Word) of God.

Spiritual Benefits of Fasting

- **Focus on Healing:**

- *And they found an Egyptian in the field, and brought him to David, and gave him bread, and he did eat; and they made him drink water; and they gave him a piece of a cake of figs, and two clusters of raisins: and when he had eaten, his spirit came again to him: for he had eaten no bread, nor drunk any water, three days and three nights. And David said unto him, To whom belongest thou? and whence art thou? And he said, I am a young man of Egypt, servant to an Amalekite; and my master left me, because three days ago I fell sick. (1 Sam. 30:11-13)*

- The body naturally fasts when sick to aid in the healing process.
- We can heal spiritually by fasting.
- We need to desire spiritual health.

Spurious Fasting Verses (KJV)

- Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting. (Matt. 17:21, Mark 9:29)
- And Cornelius said, Four days ago I was fasting until this hour... (Acts 10:30)
- Defraud ye not one the other, except *it be* with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer. (1 Cor. 7:5)

Fasting and Legalism



- Mt 6:16 Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

Fasting in Ninevah

And the people of Nineveh believed in God; they proclaimed a fast and put on sackcloth, from the greatest to the least. When the news reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, took off his robe, put on sackcloth and sat down in ashes. He then had it proclaimed throughout Nineveh, by decree of the king and his nobles, as follows: "No person or animal, herd or flock, may eat anything; they may not graze, they may not drink any water. All must put on sackcloth and call on God with all their might; and **let everyone renounce his evil ways and violent behaviour**. Who knows? Perhaps God will change his mind and relent and renounce his burning wrath, so that we shall not perish." **God saw their efforts to renounce their evil ways. And God relented** about the disaster which he had threatened to bring on them, and did not bring it. (Jonah 3:5-10 NJB)

A Tool

- Indications of spiritual help
- Not a command



The Medical Side of Fasting

Fasting is simply wonderful. I can do practically anything. It's a miracle cure. It cured my asthma.

Actress Cloris Leachman

Feeding Frenzy



- 300,000 deaths in the US each year are attributed to poor diet and lack of physical activity. CDC, Atlanta
- For 20–74 year olds, the prevalence of obesity increased from 15.0% (1976–1980) to 32.9% (2003–2004). CDC

Why are we getting fatter?



- Low cost & convenience of processed food
- Larger portions
- More money, less time
 - Fast food, restaurants
- Marketing
- Less exercise
 - Urban sprawl
 - The automobile

Risks of Being Overweight

- Hypertension
- Dyslipidemia (for example, high total cholesterol or high levels of triglycerides)
- Type 2 diabetes
- Coronary heart disease
- Stroke
- Gallbladder disease
- Osteoarthritis
- Sleep apnea and respiratory problems
- Some cancers (endometrial, breast, and colon)

Body Mass Index



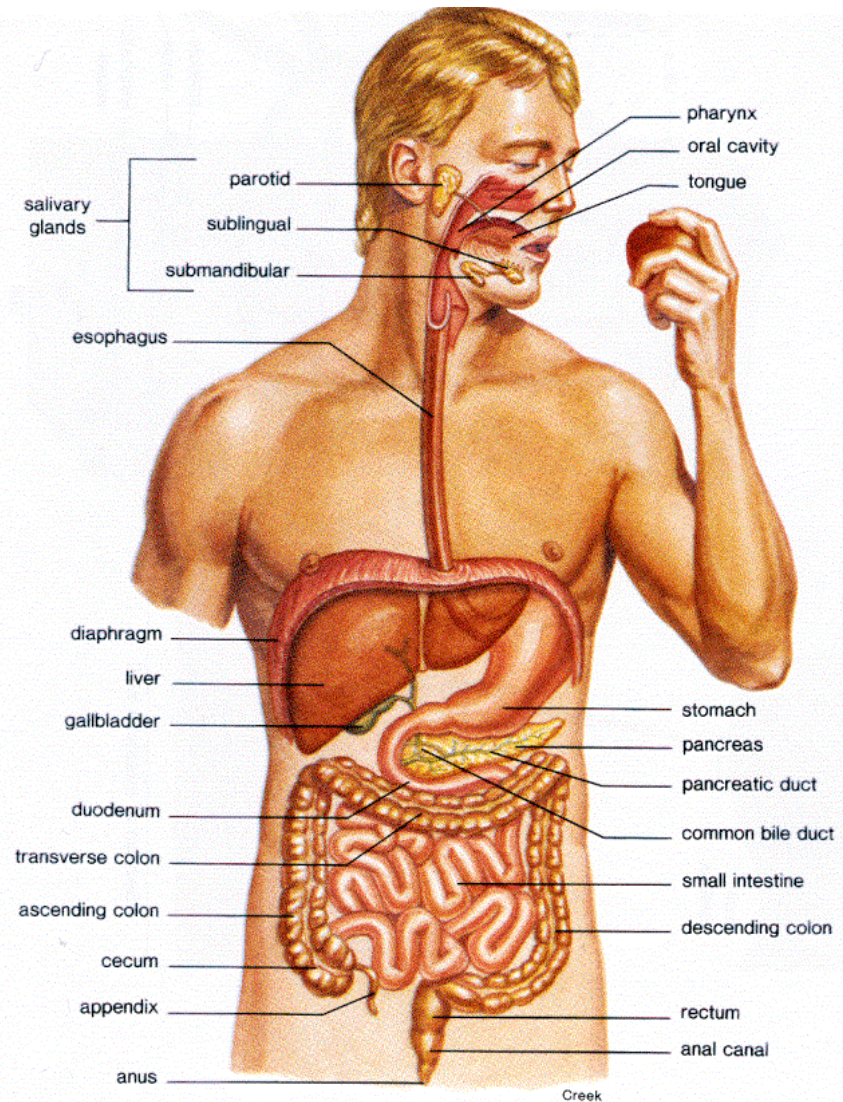
Calculating Your BMI

$$\text{BMI} = \frac{\text{weight (lbs.)} \times 703}{\text{Height}^2 \text{ (in.)}}$$

WEIGHT	100	105	110	115	120	125	130	135	140	145	150	155	160	165	170	175	180	185	190	195	200	205	210	215	220	225	230	235	240	245	250	
HEIGHT																																
5'0"	20	21	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	
5'1"	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	43	44	45	46	47	
5'2"	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	
5'3"	18	19	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	43	44	
5'4"	17	18	19	20	21	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	39	40	41	42	43	
5'5"	17	17	18	19	20	21	22	22	23	24	25	26	27	27	28	29	30	31	32	32	33	34	35	36	37	37	38	39	40	41	42	
5'6"	16	17	18	19	19	20	21	22	23	23	24	25	26	27	27	28	29	30	31	31	32	33	34	35	36	36	37	38	39	40	40	
5'7"	16	16	17	18	19	20	20	21	22	23	23	24	25	26	27	27	28	29	30	31	31	32	33	34	34	35	36	37	38	38	39	
5'8"	15	16	17	17	18	19	20	21	21	22	23	24	24	25	26	27	27	28	29	30	30	31	32	33	33	34	35	36	36	37	38	
5'9"	15	16	16	17	18	18	19	20	21	21	22	23	24	24	25	26	27	27	28	29	30	30	31	32	32	33	34	35	35	36	37	
5'10"	14	15	16	17	17	18	19	19	20	21	22	22	23	24	24	25	26	27	27	28	29	29	30	31	32	32	33	34	34	35	36	
5'11"	14	15	15	16	17	17	18	19	20	20	21	22	22	23	24	24	25	26	26	27	28	29	29	30	31	31	32	33	33	34	35	
6'0"	14	14	15	16	16	17	18	18	19	20	20	21	22	22	23	24	24	25	26	26	27	28	28	29	30	31	31	32	33	33	34	
6'1"	13	14	15	15	16	16	17	18	18	19	20	20	21	22	22	23	24	24	25	26	26	27	28	28	29	30	30	31	32	32	33	
6'2"	13	13	14	15	15	16	17	17	18	19	19	20	21	21	22	22	23	24	24	25	26	26	27	28	28	29	30	30	31	31	32	
6'3"	12	13	14	14	15	16	16	17	17	18	19	19	20	21	21	22	22	23	24	24	25	26	26	27	27	28	29	29	30	31	31	
6'4"	12	13	13	14	15	15	16	16	17	18	18	19	19	20	21	21	22	23	23	24	24	25	26	26	27	27	28	29	29	30	30	

What happens to our bodies during fasting

- Day 1: Breakdown of glycogen stores in the liver.
- Day 2: Body turns to protein and fat reserves for energy.
- Day 3: The liver produces ketones (ketosis). Body flushes impurities.



What happens to our bodies during fasting

- Day 4 and on: Ketosis continues. Body uses small amounts of muscle tissue to provide glucose. Body uses fat stores until depleted.
- Day 40?: True hunger sets in. Body starts to breakdown.



Breaking the Fast

- Your body has stopped producing digestive enzymes.
- Eat small amounts of fresh fruit.

Possible Side Effects of Fasting

- Can experience-
 - Headaches (often caffeine related)
 - Dizziness
 - Abdominal pains
 - Trembling
 - Nausea

Medical Evidence that it helps...

- Cardiovascular and circulatory diseases
- Migraines
- Glaucoma
- Digestive diseases
- Liver diseases
- Crohn disease
- Chronic colitis

Medical Evidence that it helps...

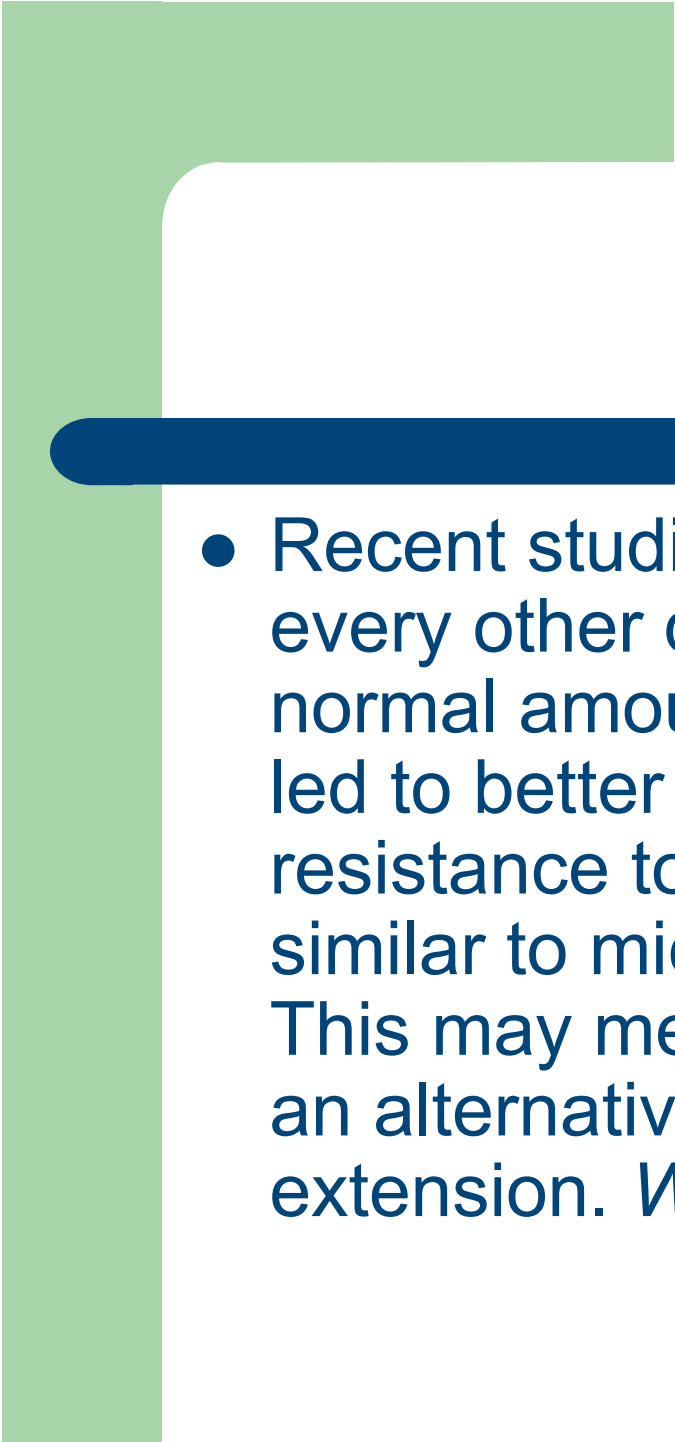

- Ulcerated colitis
- Skin diseases
- Cirrhosis
- Eczema
- Bronchial asthma
- Depression

Psychological Benefits of Fasting

- In Japan, out of 382 patients with psychological conditions, 87% were cured through fasting. *Sapporo Medical Journal*

What the Medical Community Says About Fasting

- I believe that fasting is the "missing link" in the Western diet. Most people overeat, eat too often, and eat a high-protein, high-fat, rich-food, building and congesting diet more consistently than they need. *Elson Haas, MD*
- Some doctors believe that pure water fasting can not only detoxify cells and rejuvenate organs, but can actually cure such diseases and conditions as cardiovascular disease, rheumatoid arthritis, asthma, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, colitis, psoriasis, lupus and some other autoimmune disorders when combined with a healthy diet. They believe that "Fasting is Nature's Restorer." *Wikipedia*

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- Recent studies on mice show that fasting every other day while eating double the normal amount of food on non-fasting days led to better insulin control, neuronal resistance to injury, and health indicators similar to mice on calorie restricted diets. This may mean that alternate-day fasting is an alternative to caloric restriction for life extension. *Wikipedia*

The image features a large green shape on the left side, which is a square with a white rounded rectangle cut out of its center. The text "Successful Fasting" is written in a bold, dark blue font within this white area. A solid dark blue horizontal bar extends from the right edge of the green shape across the bottom of the page.

Successful Fasting

Ask, Search, Knock

Ask, and it will be given to you; **search**, and you will find; **knock**, and the door will be opened to you. **Everyone** who asks receives; **everyone** who searches finds; **everyone** who knocks will have the door opened. Is there anyone among you who would hand his son a stone when he asked for bread? Or would hand him a snake when he asked for a fish? If you, then, evil as you are, **know how to give your children what is good, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him!**" (Matt. 7:7-11 NJB)

The Persistent Widow

And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men **ought always to pray, and not to faint**; Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth? (Luke 18:1-8)



The Substance of Fasting

Therefore also now, saith the LORD, **turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God:** for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil. Who knoweth if he will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him; even a meat offering and a drink offering unto the LORD your God? **Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly:** Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children, and those that suck the breasts: let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet. Let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare thy people, O LORD, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God? Then will the LORD be jealous for his land, and pity his people.(Joel 2:12-18)

Ask, Search, Knock

*I set my face unto the Lord God,
to seek by prayer and
supplications, with fasting.*

(Daniel 9:3)

What does God want?

- Groveling?
- Suffering?
- Seeking?
- Self-Discipline?

Successful Fasting - Israel



Then all the Israelites and the whole people went off to Bethel; they wept and sat in Yahweh's presence; they fasted all day till the evening and presented burnt offerings and communion sacrifices before Yahweh.

(Judges 20:26)

Successful Fasting - Samuel

Samuel then said, "Muster all Israel at Mizpah and I shall plead with Yahweh for you." So they mustered at Mizpah and drew water and poured it out before Yahweh. They fasted that day and declared, "We have sinned against Yahweh." And Samuel was judge over the Israelites at Mizpah.. (1 Samuel 7:5,6)

Successful Fasting - Ahab

- 1 Kings 21 – Ahab kills Naboth
- Ahab rebuked by Elijah
- “And it came to pass, when Ahab heard those words, that he rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly. And the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before me? because he humbleth himself before me, I will not bring the evil in his days: but in his son’s days will I bring the evil upon his house. (21:27-29)

“Unsuccessful” Fasting - David

And Nathan departed unto his house. And the LORD struck the child that Uriah's wife bare unto David, and it was very sick. David therefore besought God for the child; and David fasted, and went in, and lay all night upon the earth. (2 Sam. 12:15-16)



“Unsuccessful” Fasting - Saul

Then answered one of the people, and said, Thy father straitly charged the people with an oath, saying, Cursed be the man that eateth any food this day. And the people were faint. Then said Jonathan, My father hath troubled the land: see, I pray you, how mine eyes have been enlightened, because I tasted a little of this honey. **How much more, if haply the people had eaten freely to day of the spoil of their enemies which they found? for had there not been now a much greater slaughter among the Philistines?** And they smote the Philistines that day from Michmash to Aijalon: and the people were very faint. (1 Sam. 14:28-31)



Fasting Miscellany



Three 40 Days Fasts – A Comparison

Moses (twice)	Elijah	Jesus
Ex. 34, Dt. 9	1 Kings 19	Matthew 4
10 Commandments	Fleeing Jezebel	Given Holy Spirit
Mount Sinai	Mount Horeb (Sinai)	Wilderness (Mt. Sinai?)
God tests Moses to be only one	Elijah believes he is only one	Jesus IS the one
The Lord passes by	The Lord passes by	
Thunder, lightning, fire, trumpet-like voice	Earthquake, wind, fire, still small voice	

Transfiguration

And after six days Jesus taketh with him Peter, and James, and John, and leadeth them up into an high mountain apart by themselves: and he was transfigured before them. And his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them. And there appeared unto them Elias with Moses: and they were talking with Jesus. (Mark 9:2-4)



The Day of Atonement

- **Lev 16:29-31; 23:26-32; Num 29:7**
- This was the only fast commanded by the Law, to be observed on the tenth day of the seventh month
- Though not called "fasting", the phrase "afflicting one's soul" was understood to refer to fasting
 - Cf. **Ps 69:10** ("chastened my soul with fasting")
 - Cf. **Ac 27:9** (where the term "Fast" refers to the Day of Atonement)
- The use of the phrase "afflict one's soul" to refer to fasting suggests a **PURPOSE** of fasting:
 - To have an affect on the SOUL (not particularly the body)

Isaiah 58



- 📖 Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.
- 📖 Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God: they ask of me the ordinances of justice; they take delight in approaching to God.

Isaiah 58

☞ Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not? wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge? Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure, and exact all your labours.

☞ Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness: ye shall not fast as ye do this day, to make your voice to be heard on high.



Isaiah 58

📖👉 Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the LORD?

🕒👉 Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?



Isaiah 58



- 📖 Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?
- 📖 Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the LORD shall be thy rereward.

Isaiah 58



🗣️ Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity;

📖 And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noonday:

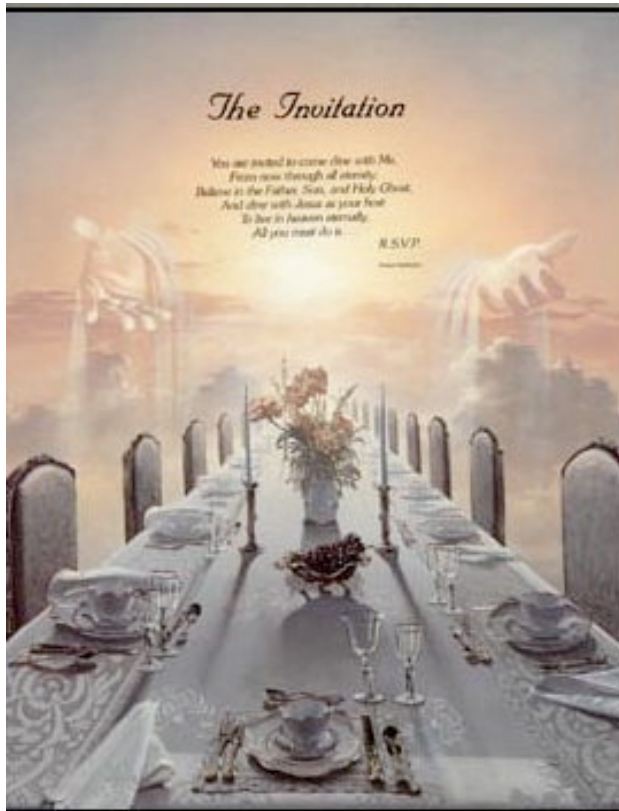
Isaiah 58

☞ And the LORD shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.

☞ And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in.



Isaiah 58



📄👉 If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words:

📄👉 Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.

Famine & Fasting

The Nature of Trials



Fasting or Famine as an act of (Self) Discipline



And the children of Israel said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the LORD **in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger.** (Ex. 16:3)

Fasting & Famine – The Lessons

And **he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger,** and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; **that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD** doth man live. (Deut. 8:3)



Famine in Egypt

There will come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt, but after them there will arise seven years of famine, and all the plenty will be forgotten in the land of Egypt; the famine will consume the land, and the plenty will be unknown in the land by reason of that famine which will follow, for it will be very grievous. And the doubling of Pharaoh's dream means that the thing is fixed by God, and **God will shortly bring it to pass.** (Gen. 41:29-32)



Fasting & Famine



Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy; to deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine. (Ps. 33:18,19)

Fasting & Famine

In the year Ahaz died came this proclamation: All Philistia, do not rejoice because the rod which used to beat you is now broken, for the serpent stock will produce a viper, its offspring will be a flying dragon. While the first-born of the poor are grazing and the destitute are resting in safety, **I shall make your stock die of hunger and then slaughter what remains of you.** Howl, gate! Shriek, city! Totter, all Philistia! For a smoke is coming from the north, and there are no deserters in those battalions. What reply will be given then to the messengers of that nation?, **That Yahweh founded Zion and there the poor of his people will find refuge.** (Is. 14:28-30 NJB)

Fasting & Famine

Awake, awake! To your feet, **Jerusalem!** You who from Yahweh's hand have drunk the cup of his wrath. The chalice, the stupefying cup, you have drained to the dregs. There is no one to guide all the children she has borne, no one to grasp her hand of all the children she has reared. Double disaster has befallen you, who is there to sympathise? **Pillage and ruin, famine and sword**, who is there to console you? **Your children are lying helpless at the end of every street like an antelope trapped in a net**; they are filled to the brim with Yahweh's wrath, with the rebuke of your God. (Is. 14:28-30 NJB)

Fasting & Famine



The lives of the just are in Yahweh's care, their birthright will endure for ever; they will not be put to shame when bad times come, in time of famine they will have plenty. (Ps. 37:18,19)

Fasting & Famine – The Lessons

The days are coming, declares the Lord Yahweh, when I shall send a famine on the country, not hunger for food, not thirst for water, but famine for hearing Yahweh's word. People will stagger from sea to sea, will wander from the north to the east, searching for Yahweh's word, but will not find it. (Amos 8:11-12 NJB)



Famine & Fasting - Habakkuk

- 1:1-4: H questions God. How long will God allow the righteous to suffer in Judah.
- 1:5-11: God says he will send the Chaldeans to punish Judah.
- 1:12-2:1: H argues that Judah is better than the Chaldeans.
- 2:2 – 2:20: God says that in the long-run, everything will work out. Be quiet.

Famine & Fasting - Habakkuk

- 3:1 – 19: H understands.
 - God is in control.
 - God is working for good.
 - Let God do His job. We focus on ours.

Fasting & Famine – Habakkuk

- The word famine literally means “to put your hand over your mouth.”
(Strong’s)
- “But the LORD is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him.”
(Hab 2:20)



Fasting & Famine – Habakkuk

Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation. (Hab. 3:17-18)



Fasting and Famine – The Lessons The Prodigal Son

...the younger son... wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had spent all, **there arose a mighty famine** in that land; and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him. And **when he came to himself**, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. **And he arose, and came to his father.** (Luke 15:13-20)



The Nature of Trials

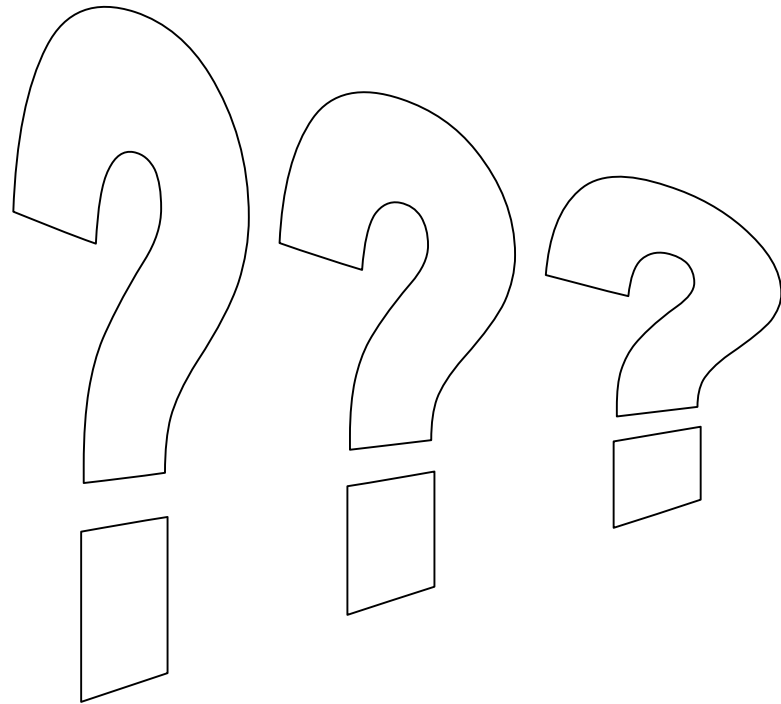
As he went along, he saw a man who had been blind from birth. His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he should have been born blind?" "Neither he nor his parents sinned," Jesus answered, "**he was born blind so that the works of God might be revealed in him.**" (John 9:1-3 NJB)



The Nature of Trials

- Test case: Is the answer “so that the works of God might be revealed in him” appropriate?
 - Why was Joseph thrown into prison?
 - Why was Jesus driven into the wilderness?
 - Why did the apostles suffer so much?
 - Why was Jeremiah thrown into the pit?

The Nature of Trials



- True or False:
 - God tests us to see how we will respond.

The Nature of Trials



- God is all-knowing so doesn't He know how we will respond?
- Does this somehow pit God against us? He throws things at us to see if we can pass the test?
- Makes God less of a partner.

The Nature of Trials

- Why does God test us?
 - Because He loves us and is in the process of molding us to be like His Son. (Dave Estey)
 - Since we've talked the talk, God brings trials for us to learn whether we'll walk the walk. (John Pople)
 - As our loving Father, God disciplines us for our good (Hebrews 12:7-11). (Norm Fadelle)
 - He tests us to develop our characters, strengthen our love and our trust in him. (Wayne Marshall)
 - I believe that is largely to shape us for His purpose, as several Biblical examples show, (Job, David, Paul, Peter) men's character and disposition are shaped by their experiences--often for God's specific purpose. (Paul Pursell)
 - So we realize that our only strength comes through Him and because of Him. (Shawn Moynihan)

The Nature of Trials

- Why does God test us?
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The Nature of Trials

After saying this, what can we add? **If God is for us, who can be against us?** Since he did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for the sake of all of us, then can we not expect that with him he will freely give us all his gifts? Who can bring any accusation against those that God has chosen? When God grants saving justice who can condemn? Are we not sure that it is Christ Jesus, who died, yes and more, who was raised from the dead and is at God's right hand, and who is adding his plea for us? **Can anything cut us off from the love of Christ,** can hardships or distress, or persecution, or lack of food and clothing, or threats or violence; as scripture says: For your sake we are being massacred all day long, treated as sheep to be slaughtered? **No; we come through all these things triumphantly victorious, by the power of him who loved us.**
(Romans 8:31-37 NJB)

The Nature of Trials

Have you forgotten that encouraging text in which you are addressed as sons? My son, do not scorn **correction from the Lord**, do not resent his training, for the Lord trains those **he loves**, and chastises every son he accepts. Perseverance is part of your training; God is treating you as his sons. Has there ever been any son whose father did not train him? If you were not getting this training, as all of you are, then you would be not sons but bastards. Besides, we have all had our human fathers who punished us, and we respected them for it; all the more readily ought we to submit to the Father of spirits, and so earn life. Our human fathers were training us for a short life and according to their own lights; but **he does it all for our own good, so that we may share his own holiness.** (Heb. 12:5-10)

The Nature of Trials



Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, **neither tempteth he any man:** But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.
(James 1:12-15 KJV)

The Nature of Trials



There hath no temptation [test] taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted [tested - Gr. *peirazo*] above that ye are able; but will with the temptation [test] also **make a way to escape**, that ye may be able to bear it.

(1 Cor. 10:13)

Luke 12:35-39



And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.